(b) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) No, Sir. There is no provision in the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958 to declare a village as 'cultural village'. However, there are 42 monuments/sites declared as of national importance under the jurisdiction of Archaeological Survey of India in the State of Uttarakhand, of which eight monuments are in Dwarahat and one monument is in Adibadri. The following expenditure has been incurred by way of structural repairs/maintenance on these monuments/sites during the last three years:

2004-05	Rs.43,87,774/-
2005-06	Rs.38,20,346/-
2006-07	Rs.31,71,750/-

Tardy flow of credit in Minority dominated districts

321. MS. SUSHILA TIRIYA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there has been tardy progress in stepping up flow of credit in the minority dominated districts;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (c) Several steps have been taken by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in the recent past to step up credit flow to minorities. In its Circular dated 1.09.2006, RBI had instructed to all the Scheduled Commercial Banks to ensure that the minority communities receive a fair and equitable portion of credit within the overall targets of Priority Sector and sub-targets of 10% earmarked for Weaker Section. The Master Circular on Priority Sector lending was amended on 18.05.2007 to include minority communities under "Weaker Section".

In their consolidated Master Circular dated 5.07.2007 on lending to minorities, the RBI has advised the banks to take care to ensure that minority communities secure in a fair and adequate measure, the benefits flowing from various Government sponsored special programmes and create a separate cell in each bank to ensure smooth flow of credit to minority communities.

In its circular dated 16.07.2007, RBI has issued a consolidated list of 121 minority concentration districts to Scheduled Commercial Banks for specially monitoring credit flow to minorities.

Easing of norms for FDI in agro-processing

322. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to further ease norms for FDI in agro-processing and agro-infrastructure;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the States and UTs likely to derive benefits from such a decision?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) and (b) In accordance with the existing FDI policy, FDI up to 100 per cent is permitted under the automatic route in Floriculture, Horticulture, Development of seeds, Animal Husbandry, Pisciculture, Acquaculture and Cultivation of Vegetable and Mushrooms under controlled conditions and services related to Agro and allied sectors. FDI upto 100 per cent, with prior Government approval, is permitted in Tea plantation subject to the conditions of divestment of 26 per cent equity of the company in favour of an Indian partner/Indian public within a period of five years and with the prior approval of the State Government concerned in case of future land use change. FDI upto 100 per cent under the automatic route is also allowed in the Food Processing Industry and for infrastructure facilities like cold storage, transportation etc. There is no proposal to further ease the FDI norms in agro processing and agro infrastructure.

(c) Does not arise.

Stable interest rate for educational loans

†323. SHRI AJAY SINGH CHAUTALA: Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government will keep interest rate on educational loans stable for the students;

(b) if so, interest rate on educational loans;

(c) whether Government are going to fix four per cent interest rate on educational loans in near future; and

(d) if so, by when?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF FINANCE (SHRI PAWAN KUMAR BANSAL): (a) to (d) The interest rates have been deregulated and banks are free to fix interest rates themselves with the approval of their Boards. Banks have been advised to fix their Benchmark Prime Lending Rate (BPLR) after taking into account cost of funds, transaction cost, risk factor, margin and other overhead expenses. As per the revised Model Education Loan Scheme, 2004, the banks are to charge interest on education loan upto Rs.4 lakh at BPLR and above Rs. 4 lakh at BPLR + 1 per cent. Simple interest is to be charged during the repayment holiday/ moratorium period.

Investor's awareness programme for non-metro cities

324. SHRI KALRAJ MISHRA:
SHRI SANTOSH BAGRODIA:

Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the SEBI proposes to commence investor's awareness programme for the non-metro cities;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.